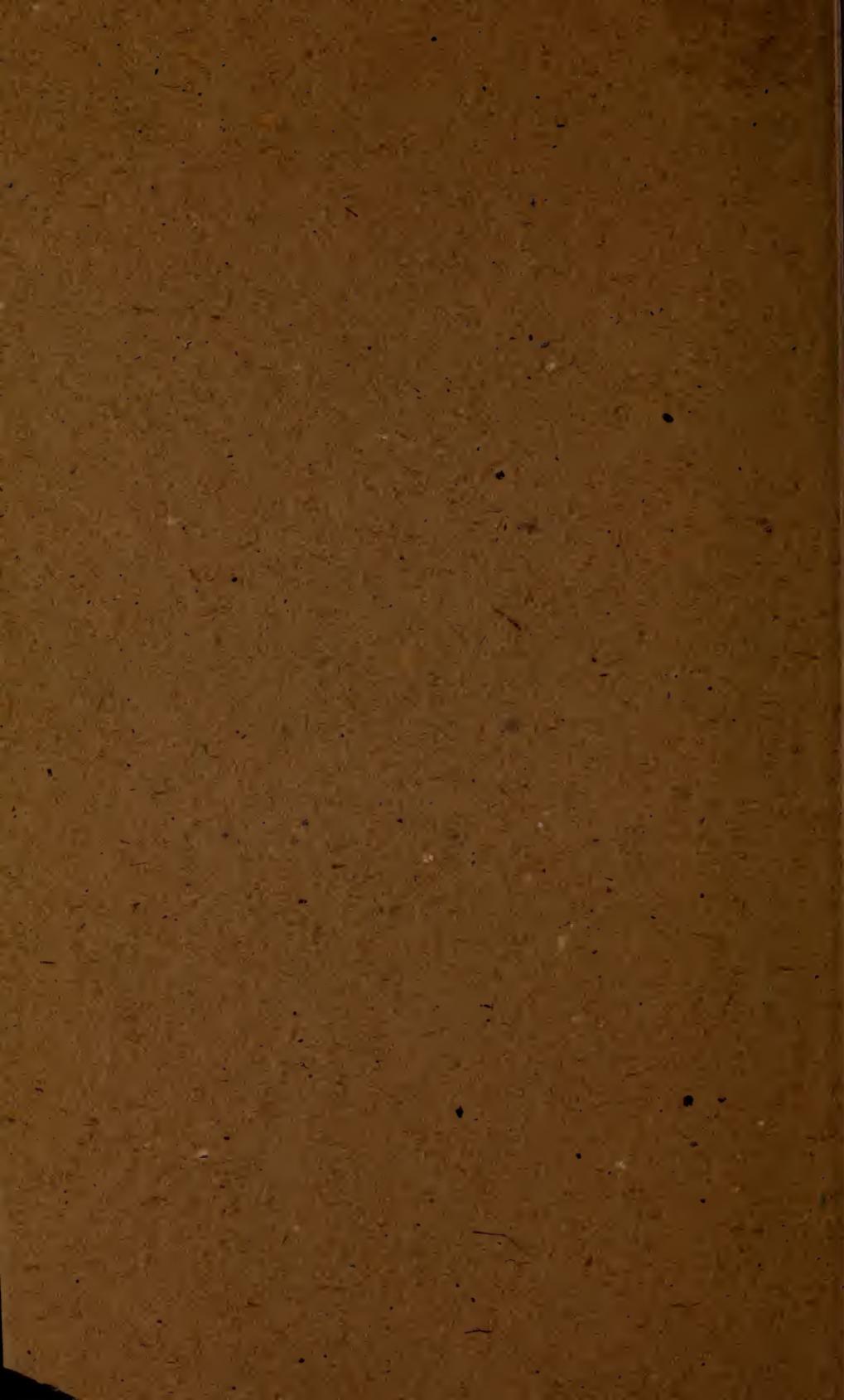


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REMARKS

UPON THE

IMPORTANCE OF AN INQUIRY

INTO THE

AMOUNT AND APPROPRIATION OF WAGES

BY THE WORKING CLASSES,

ADDRESSED TO

The Statistical Section of the British Association,

AT ITS MEETING IN LIVERPOOL, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 1837.

LORD VISCOUNT SANDON IN THE CHAIR,

BY WILLIAM FELKIN,

FELLOW OF THE STATISTICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

PRINTED FOR GENERAL DISTRIBUTION AT THE REQUEST OF THE SECTION

WITH SOME ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS.

LONDON: -

HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO., PATERNOSTER ROW;
W. DEARDEN, NOTTINGHAM.

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REMARKS.

At the Bristol Meeting of this Section, I presented some thoughts upon the importance and difficulty of obtaining a knowledge of the weekly wages received by the labouring classes in manufactures, and of the manner in which the sums earned are appropriated—which, from the late period they were received, did not obtain the attention of the members then assembled. Could the facts be obtained, their importance would at once be manifest, if it should appear from them, that the wages earned were for a series of years of sufficient amount, in extensive districts to supply the means, if properly appropriated, of obtaining for families in an ordinary state of things, food, clothing, lodging, and the plain education of the children, also in many cases, a plot of garden ground for use and recreation, and a Savings' bank deposit besides; and yet that the great bulk of the population thus paid are in the main ill fed, poorly clothed, and indifferently lodged; exhibiting neither suitable care for the comfort and improvement of their children, nor foresight as to their own future circumstances or well being: the husband and father, in a majority of instances, expending for his own personal gratification, all he can command, beyond the bare sum absolutely necessary for the sustenance of those dependent upon him.— Increasing observation and intercourse with the working classes, oblige me to come to the conclusion, that this is in truth the actual and widely extended state of things amongst them. Circumstances have occurred in Nottingham and in its neighbourhood during the current spring and summer, which present some points for the consideration of those who feel interested in the state of these classes; and which I conceive are corroborative of the opinion I have expressed above, regarding their want of providential care for themselves and their families. I respectfully ask the attention of the section, to the following brief analysis of the facts I have arranged at large upon the accompanying sheets respecting the case to which I allude.

Ref. 24 May 17 David Llewelyn
Haberdashers

The commercial pressure which began to be very generally felt throughout the manufacturing districts in the first months of this year, has borne with almost unparalleled severity upon the trade of this place, and entirely incapacitated for a time most of our manufacturers from giving their accustomed employment to their workpeople. About the middle of April, evidence of great suffering becoming very apparent, by the falling off in consumption, and the increasing sales or pledges of clothes, furniture, &c., a committee was appointed by a public meeting, convened to obtain funds for relieving the distressed workpeople in the Hosiery and Lace Trades of Nottingham and the neighbourhood within five miles, by furnishing them with employment unconnected with the staple business of the place; and after due consideration, the improvement and continuation of a certain

road leading directly to a previously almost inaccessible part of the vicinity, was decided upon. It was also agreed, not to employ any person who had received parochial relief since the first of March last. The committee then set to work the numbers, and disbursed the amounts weekly, which are stated in the annexed account. The greatest number dependent upon the fund at one time was 4407 persons.

The subscription opened to afford this relief amounted to £5000., and was expended by the end of August: when about a mile of road, through a very picturesque part, has been constructed, with deep cuttings; the value of the adjacent property has been already increased three-fold, with a certainty of further augmentation very speedily; and a way is now opened to a large piece of parish ground, suitable for one hundred garden allotments for the poor, of a quarter of an acre each, and which land has hitherto been almost useless.

The total number of applicants were, of lace makers or twist hands 839. Framework-knitters 797, Machine smiths 178, and of sundry other trades 164, making altogether 1978 men, having 1401 wives, and 3508 children; being 6887 persons said to be unprovided for. 889 of these applicants belonged to parishes in Nottingham, 1024 to the county, and 65 elsewhere. 1083 of them were living in Nottingham, 591 in the Radford Union which immediately adjoins the town, and 304 in surrounding parishes.

The committee finding that the numbers employed became very great, instituted as searching an inquiry as their means would admit, into the circumstances and character of all fresh applicants. Their clerk and his assistants made personal visits at the place of each man's residence and to his last employer, and filled up the blank printed forms containing the questions agreed upon by the committee. These extended to about 1100, but some returns are *nil* from various causes. 1043 of these reports however are complete, and I have distributed them upon the accompanying sheets into trades. There were 452 stocking makers, 498 lace makers, and 93 smiths, &c. depending on the other two trades. The wives and children of the married men, were almost universally unemployed; being chiefly engaged when at work in seaming hose, embroidering hose or lace, mending, &c. and of course the term of their want of employment would be about the average of that of the men. The reports state the ages, and often the earnings of the wives; though many had been employed, whose earnings are not stated. The ages of the children, but not their earnings are given.

The remarks upon character are of course very various; such as "clean," "comfortable," "industrious," "sober," "steady," "very poor," "very destitute," "honest," or the reverse. There are remarks of this kind in all excepting 66 cases; 440 lace makers are reported upon favourably, and 39 the contrary; 360 stocking makers favourably, 50 the reverse; 75 smiths favourably and 13 the contrary; making 875 good and 102 indifferent characters. These reports are probably somewhat too favourable; yet on the whole, they were generally considered a decent reputable body of work people. **EIGHT ONLY had been pauperised in any form.**

The length of time they had been partly employed was stated; and it seems that the Stocking makers averaged 17 weeks $1\frac{1}{2}$ days; Lace makers 21 weeks and half a day; Smiths &c. 20 weeks 1 day and a quarter; the total average of partial employment was 19 weeks 3 days. The Stocking makers had been out of work wholly 5 weeks 1 day on an average; Lace makers 8 weeks 1 day; Smiths &c. 8 weeks 2 days; the total average of entire want of employ was 6 weeks and 5 days. 10 of these men were pensioners averaging 4s. a week. *Not one of the 1043 stated himself to have been a depositor in the savings' bank.* 90 of the Stocking makers were however in Sick Clubs, 3 in Provident Society, and 11 in Odd Fellows' Societies, making 104 out of 452 or one in $4\frac{1}{2}$. Of the lace makers, 128 were in Sick Clubs, 4 in Provident Society, and 9 in Odd Fellows' Societies, making 141 out of 498 or one in $3\frac{1}{2}$. Of the Smiths &c. 13 were in Sick Clubs, none in Provident Society, and 5 in Odd Fellows' Societies, or one in 5. The total is 263, or one in 4 persons who had provided in some measure for future sickness, and for scarcely any thing more.

The amount of weekly earnings when in full work is given, though probably understated in many cases, and has been analysed in conjunction with the numbers in sick clubs, &c.; the results I give below. The rate of wages does not seem to materially influence the desire to belong to these clubs, or to lay by any portion of the earnings to meet future contingencies.

| The Framework-knitters earned when in full work, | | | | And of these were in Sick Clubs, |
|--|----|----|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| | | S. | D. | |
| 1 | at | 2 | 3 per week..... | 0 |
| 1 | — | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| 3 | — | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| 13 | — | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| 18 | — | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 25 | — | 8 | 0 | 4 |
| 36 | — | 9 | 0 | 6 |
| 80 | — | 10 | 0 | 20 |
| 33 | — | 11 | 0 | 11 |
| 103 | — | 12 | 0 | 22 |
| 20 | — | 13 | 0 | 5 |
| 52 | — | 14 | 0 | 21 |
| 29 | — | 15 | 0 | 5 |
| 22 | — | 16 | 0 | 5 |
| 4 | — | 17 | 0 | 2 |
| 9 | — | 18 | 0 | 1 |
| 1 | — | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | — | 24 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | — | 26 | 0 | 0 |
| <hr/> 452 averaging 11 6½ a week | | | | <hr/> 104 in sick clubs &c. |

Of their wives 176 are reported as averaging 1s. 10d $\frac{1}{4}$. a week

The Lace makers earned when in full work,

And of these there were in sick clubs,

| | s. d. | |
|----|-------|------------|
| 2 | — | 5 0 |
| 1 | — | 6 0 |
| 10 | — | 8 0 |
| 6 | — | 9 0 |
| 35 | — | 10 0 |
| 13 | — | 11 0 |
| 50 | — | 12 0 |
| 23 | — | 13 0 |
| 72 | — | 14 0 |
| 72 | — | 15 0 |
| 69 | — | 16 0 |
| 18 | — | 17 0 |
| 51 | — | 18 0 |
| 6 | — | 19 0 |
| 55 | — | 20 0 |
| 1 | — | 21 0 |
| 3 | — | 22 0 |
| 2 | — | 23 0 |
| 2 | — | 24 0 |
| 2 | — | 25 0 |
| 1 | — | 26 0 |
| 1 | — | 27 0 |
| 1 | — | 28 0 |

496 averaged 15 1 a week 141 in sick clubs &c.

Wives 182 averaged 2 1½ a week

93 Smiths, &c. averaged in full work 16s. 4d. and 34 of their wives averaged 1s. 9d. a week.

The total average weekly earnings of the 1043 men appear to have been 13s. 7½d. and of 392 of their wives 1s. 11½d. a week. The total average of the weekly earnings of each family according to their own statement would be about 17s. 6d.

304 of the men had 565 children upwards of 11 years of age, or nearly 2 to a family able to work, whose earnings would be about 3s. a week. 661 had 1600 children below 11 years old, or about 2½ on an average to each; of these, 300 were above and 1300 below 7 years of age.

The total number of men was 1043, of wives 779, of children 2165, the total number being 3987 persons included in this inquiry.

The wages of the Nottinghamshire Bobbin Net hands averaged in 1829, 25s., in 1831, 20s., in 1833, 19s., in 1836, 17s., a week, which are the rates established

by the inquiries on which my statistical papers drawn up and published in those years are founded. Those employed on this fund stated themselves to have received 15s. a week. The wages of the Stocking makers in the same district had risen from 9s. in 1833 to 11s. 6d. in 1836. The increasing difficulties of the former class, and the past long continued and severe privations of the latter, seem to have been alike insufficient to prove to them the importance and necessity of foresight and economy. It may however be remarked that these papers shew the fact, that men with five or six children have supported themselves and their families under the circumstances of short work, or total deprivation of labour, as long as the unmarried or those who had smaller families, and they form the greater proportion of those whose cases were inquired into, who are contributors to sick clubs, &c.

I find a great difficulty in ascertaining the actual clear wages received, tested by the employer's books. However as an example of the case before hinted at, of earnings being under-stated by the men, I have got from the books of one Factory the earnings for three months in full work, of those who were subsequently employed by the fund. The results are, No. 1 says 16s. he received 18s.; No. 2 says 15s., he received 18s.; No. 3 says 16s., he received 20s.; No. 4. says 18s., he received 26s.; No. 5 says 15s., he received 25s.; and from my intercourse with employers and workmen in the Bobbin Net Trade, I have reason to suppose similar under-statements occur in these reports.

The unmarried and young married men were insubordinate and difficult to manage, or get to work by the committee's agents and overlooker; they compelled the committee to discharge several companies, amounting to from 100 to 200 in all.—These had been idle at day work, drinking, fighting &c.—task work was almost entirely substituted, and 400 or 500 men performed as much labour as 8 or 900 had done before; the business assumed a new face of order and sobriety, and cost not a tithe of the previous labour and anxiety in management.

The health and strength of the people, as indicated by their altered appearance, was decidedly improved. Instead of the anxious and pale countenances long remarked in Stocking-makers and latterly amongst Bobbin Net hands, these men assumed, when broken in to their new employment, a florid and cheerful aspect; and many of them stated themselves to be much stronger and better than formerly, though the amount they received from the fund, was but small. The average weekly pay was 8s. 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. a man, which was equal to 1s. 10d. a week for each person dependent on the fund.

As the Harvest time came on, the least pressing cases were drafted off, and the numbers were diminished with the decrease in the amount of the fund until August 26th, when the last 113 men were discharged, the subscription being exhausted. Although there are some of these families now supported by or coming upon the Parish Union rates, yet the original idea of relieving the distressed without pauperising them, has in a good measure been accomplished by the fund; and it is hoped that the staple trades may, by the end of the Harvest, absorb the greater part of the existing surplus labour. The minds of the poor

generally have been suitably impressed by this prompt and marked expression of public sympathy; and making due allowance for the difficulty of managing such a body of men, suddenly brought together in a new kind of labour, the affair has terminated so as to give general satisfaction.

On referring to the foregoing details, the following facts are apparent—That the number of distressed applicants from one of the highest paid working classes in England viz. the Bobbin Net hands, was as large as that from one of the lowest paid classes, i.e. the Stocking makers; the one having fallen in a series of years from 40s. or upwards to 15s. or 20s; the other having risen from about 7s. up to about 12s. a week, the numbers employed in each trade in the district in question, being pretty nearly equal.

That whatever may be thought as to the sufficiency of the average amount of the earnings of these men and their families, yet that it afforded the means of at least small savings, is evident from the number of those amongst them who were members of sick clubs and other societies; therefore the means of effecting considerable savings must have been enjoyed in the higher paid trades in Nottingham.

That the number of those who made provision by contribution to sick clubs &c. did not rise with the larger amount of wages; for of the 245 members, 132 were of those who received 14s. a week and under (the average wages being 13s. 7d.) and 113 were of those who received above that sum.

That the provision itself was partial and unsatisfactory; partial, because not calculated to meet trade fluctuations at all; and unsatisfactory, because many of our sick clubs are ill managed and held at public houses; also some are yearly proved to be insolvent. While the Savings' Bank was neglected, which presents both facility and security in the highest degree, and from which the deposits can be withdrawn for use upon emergencies of every kind.

In concluding this address, I would therefore again observe, that while every thing which bears upon the state and interests of the working classes of this country, is acknowledged by all observant persons to be of growing and vast importance, and a rate of wages adequate to the supply of all their wants is that to which they are justly entitled in return for the exertion of their skill and industry, these statistics shew there is nothing that many of them so little understand and consequently esteem and practise, as a prudent economy and foresight. And yet they must be induced to exercise these virtues or their fire-sides will be altogether deserted, and their domestic habits and comforts destroyed; their children will remain uneducated or receive (what ought to be felt by every parent not a pauper, degrading to him) eleemosynary instruction from comparative strangers; they will be much overworked and little cared for; the character and tone of the working-man's mind, will be greatly perverted and demoralized; and the sub-stratum of society must sink, endangering both our national interests and the general peace.

I submit that the 1043 cases inquired into by the agents of the Nottingham relief fund, not having been invidiously or unfairly selected, as fitted to sustain

some preconceived opinion or theory, but taken in the mass as they presented themselves, and the returns impartially dealt with; the results, corresponding also with those obtained from observation and inquiry carried on in other manufacturing districts, may be properly considered to be indicative of a defect in the economic principles and conduct of the well paid in the working class; and that the analysis of them in this paper, justifies my urging upon this section and upon our statistical societies, an inquiry into the best mode of ascertaining on a large scale, the rates and appropriation of earnings. And in connexion with this subject, it will be of great use to collect the facts respecting the increase or decrease of beer-shops, dram-shops, pawn-shops, and pauperism in manufacturing neighbourhoods; as well as the relative consumption of wholesome food; the cultivation of gardens; the amount of paid education for working-men's children; the age at which children begin to labour; the state of institutions for the encouragement of savings; with other details, which will naturally suggest themselves as of collateral importance. From these data, able and patriotic minds will be enabled to draw such inferences, and suggest such plans, as may be of infinite service to the poor and to the community at large.

Since I drew up the preceding remarks, I have, with the obliging assistance of the clerk of the Nottingham Savings' Bank, made out a classified statement of the depositors at that institution, which I append to this paper. The number and amount of deposits from the Staple trades workmen, is very small; but large from the work-women, whose wages are invariably of but moderate amount. By far the largest part of the sum deposited however, is by domestic male and female servants and labourers. I think this document will confirm the views I have above expressed. Before sitting down, your lordship and the section must allow me (to prevent any misconception of my feelings or intentions while drawing up this paper in which some remarks regarding the working classes occur, which might otherwise wear the appearance of severity) to observe that I have sprung from that class, and am mainly dependant upon it; and have devoted that portion of time or talent I could command beyond the requisite attention to my private business, to the improvement of their physical and moral condition, and the promotion of their real happiness.

No. 1. Depositors in Savings' Bank Nottingham, August 24th, 1837.

| | | | |
|---|-----|---|------|
| Maleservants | 506 | Femaleservants | 1307 |
| Labourers, Gardeners, Cottagers, &c. | 702 | Dress makers, Sempstresses, &c. | 280 |
| Warehousemen, Clerks, &c. | 77 | Cheveners, Menders, &c. | 398 |
| Artizans | 443 | Widows | 141 |
| Persons chiefly in retail trade .. | 497 | Schoolmistresses, governesses, &c. | 105 |
| Coal-miners..... | 37 | Females | 2231 |
| Lace makers | 437 | Sundries chiefly Infants | 302 |
| Stocking makers..... | 360 | Males | 3059 |
| | | Trust-deposits..... | 509 |
| Present number of accounts | | | 6101 |
| Number of accounts on 20th. of November 1836. was | | | 6218 |
| Accounts are decreased by | | | 117 |

The amount of balances on 6057 deposits was £142,328. or £23. 10s. each ; I find that 267 lace-deposits amount to £190. or 14s. 4d. each ; the remaining 170 amount to £4760. or £28. each ; and 120 Stocking makers' deposits amount to £120. or £1. each ; the other 240, to £5735. or £23. 18s. each. The small deposits are evidently mere balances only. The real depositors of the workmen in the two staple trades of this district are 410, amounting to £10,495. and cannot have been materially reduced by the recent commercial pressure, or the total number of accounts would also have been decreased in greater ratio than above stated.

No. 2. Statement of numbers employed, and amount of wages paid weekly by the relief Fund Committee.

| 1837. | Men. | Paid. | Wives. | Children under 16 years of age. | Total benefited. |
|----------|------|----------|--------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | | £. s. d. |
| April 29 | 45 | 14 18 0 | 44 | 184 | 273 |
| May 6 | 125 | 61 5 0 | 123 | 520 | 768 |
| 13 | 924 | 336 2 8 | 764 | 2302 | 3990 |
| 20 | 961 | 373 10 0 | 854 | 2466 | 4281 |
| 27 | 865 | 369 14 6 | 742 | 2038 | 3645 |
| June 3 | 920 | 438 6 6 | 870 | 2179 | 3969 |
| 10 | 919 | 363 5 8 | 843 | 2136 | 3898 |
| 17 | 970 | 406 10 8 | 920 | 2363 | 4253 |

On the following Monday there were at work as follows :—viz.

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Single men | 49 |
| Married without children..... | 76 |
| Ditto with one child..... | 182 |
| Ditto with two children | 224 |
| Ditto with three ditto | 179 |
| Ditto with four ditto | 135 |
| Ditto with five ditto | 80 |
| Ditto with six ditto, and upwards | 65 |
| Men at work | 990 |
| Suppose wives..... | 941 |
| Ditto children..... | 2576 |
| Dependant on the Fund | 4407 |
| 24 | 882 |
| July 1 | 815 |
| 8 | 634 |
| 15 | 450 |
| 22 | 368 |
| 29 | 348 |
| | 383 6 5 |
| | 339 10 9 |
| | 326 18 3 |
| | 252 10 11 |
| | 191 13 5 |
| | 96 13 8 |
| | 830 |
| | 757 |
| | 623 |
| | 449 |
| | 367 |
| | 348 |
| | 2224 |
| | 2039 |
| | 1804 |
| | 1530 |
| | 1303 |
| | 1272 |
| | 3936 |
| | 3611 |
| | 3061 |
| | 2429 |
| | 2038 |
| | 1168 |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|-----|-----|---|---|-----|-----|------|
| August 5 | 238 | 110 | 1 | 0 | 238 | 890 | 1366 |
| 12 | 226 | 129 | 1 | 5 | 226 | 867 | 1319 |
| 19 | 128 | 76 | 4 | 9 | 128 | 461 | 717 |
| 26 | 113 | 52 | 6 | 0 | 113 | 402 | 628 |

Total—£4322 19 6 expended in wages to applicants.

Tools, (which have been reserved) materials, overlookers, clerks, advertisements, and other necessary expenses make up the £5000.—

SUPPLEMENTARY OBSERVATIONS.

THE circumstance of being honored with a request to make the contents of the preceding pages public through the medium of the press, has unexpectedly given me the opportunity, which I gladly embrace, of offering some practical observations upon the subject of the working man's appropriation of his wages, which from the severe laws that govern statistical inquiries, were inadmissible in my address to that section of the British Association. And I am the more encouraged to adopt this course, from the constantly increasing attention that the state and interests of the working classes command generally, and especially amongst that large body of enlightened and public spirited men who annually meet in the particular section of the Association to which I have attached myself; and who, coming from all parts of the empire and from many foreign parts, merchants, manufacturers, peers, commoners, agriculturists, men of all professions, and every sect, evidenced by their laborious researches after facts and unwearied diligence in the analysis of them for useful purposes, their anxiety to promote the well being of the labouring population around them. During the sittings of this section at the Liverpool Meeting, a very interesting and valuable collection of carefully digested facts was brought, as it were in one mass, to bear upon this most interesting subject, and I shall not scruple to make use of such of them as may further my design after making this general acknowledgement. The condition of the labouring classes, their education for good or evil, and the principles by which their conduct is or ought to be guided, are subjects which at present occupy the wisest heads and the most benevolent hearts. It is confessed by all such that though composed of grades and orders, in some measure defined by circumstances, employments, or talents, yet that society is indivisible in all that relates to its real and ultimate interests and happiness; so that if the members of any one class, especially if it were the most powerful in numbers and physical strength, should act selfishly and immorally, as though they forgot that privilege and duty are correlative, and that every station in life, and each source of enjoyment has its corresponding responsibilities (the fulfilment of which cannot be neglected without proportionate injury to the individual, the class, or the community), the whole body must suffer; and unless the evil were remedied by the application of right principles, some dire national calamity must follow.

No division or rank in society is exempt from this great law of social existence; the highest cannot evade or break through its requisitions with impunity any more than the lowest. A great, indeed an awful responsibility attends the possession of wealth, or power, or talents; and a strict account must be rendered of a perverted employment of them from their legitimate use. Were a similar inquiry to the one I have proposed into the employment of the pittances earned by the labourer, to be instituted into the disbursements and habits of the great landed and monied proprietors, the learned, or even the manufacturing, trading, and mercantile classes but slightly elevated above him, it is certain that the very errors we deplore in his class are but copied from the luxury, the pride, the licentious and intemperate heartlessness so extensively prevalent amongst those whose station and influence cause them to be narrowly observed and closely imitated by those below them. But then the working man has his responsibilities and duties also; as plain, as important, and as unbending as those of the prince; and it will not be difficult to shew that in the honorable discharge of these, rest his security and happiness. It is proper to remark here, that the manufacturing labourers complain, and with some justice, of the excessively broad line of demarcation drawn between them and their employers; and this in so large a proportion of instances, and for such a continuance, as to have destroyed much of the sympathy and feeling of identity of interest which must exist in a sound and healthy state of things. The adviser, protector, and friend, have been too frequently displaced by the severe, and harsh, and haughty master. The independent commanding attitude of the employer, has been met by untractable indifference and recklessness on the part of the man; and these baneful feelings have been often not a little heightened of late years, by frequently recurring and excessive fluctuations in demand for our manufactures, and consequently in the wages paid for labour. Trade prosperity has brought with it only an increase of improvidence and vice; and adverse times have superinduced unmitigated misery. Happily, employers, as well as others, are awaking to a sense of the important duty owing to their work people; and it may be hoped that by an union of justice in regard to the amount of wages, kindness by assisting to effect the best appropriation of them, and faithfulness in pointing out the folly and wickedness of idleness and extravagance, the former will regain the confidence and regard of those of the workpeople who may have been estranged from them, and the latter make grateful returns for so important an obligation.

Having cleared away by these preliminary remarks, the ground for any objection which might be made on account of supposed partiality in favour of the opulent and employing classes, and prejudice against the labourers in manufactures; and also shewn the vital importance of every description of persons in the social circle, faithfully discharging the obligations laid upon them in society, we proceed to point out for the candid consideration of the working people, a variety of particulars in which they will gain much by a careful and economic appropriation of their wages.

If any one intends to improve his condition, he must earn all he can, spend as

little as he can, and make what he does spend bring him and his family all the real enjoyment he can. The first saving which a working man effects out of his earnings is the first step; and, because it is the first, the most important step towards true independence. Now independence is as practicable in the case of an industrious and economic though originally poor workman as in that of the tradesman or merchant, and is as great and estimable a blessing. The same process must be attended to, i.e. the entire expenditure being kept below the clear income, all contingent claims being carefully considered and provided for; and the surplus held sacred to be employed for those purposes, and those only which duty and conscience may point out as important or desirable. The possession of this reserved fund or capital, let the amount be ever so small, so that it is under ordinary circumstances an increasing one, infallibly produces independence of feeling and character; and leads a man to trust to himself and not to others, for what is necessary to his own comforts and well being, and the happiness of his family.

He is at once and constantly supplied with the strongest motive for fresh exertion; the mind has a clear and definite object placed before it; and that object is one that his judgment and feeling unite in approving as worthy of some amount of present privation that he may attain it. His conduct becomes gradually regulated by it; the thoughts are turned inwards and homewards; and while he is determinately employed in overcoming the untoward circumstances by which he may be surrounded so as to make them bend to his great design of not living a slave to others through the force of his necessities, he gradually acquires and exercises that most excellent of all human acquisitions, self control; he is no longer a slave to himself. He learns to understand clearly and appreciate fully his own position in society; he knows and feels that independent labour is as honourable as it is useful; and he will seek to become so well skilled in his particular art or handicraft, and so well known for punctuality and fidelity in its exercise, that he may command constant employment on the most advantageous terms. We have said that this requires a course of laborious exertion and strict economy; a little foresight, and possibly some privation. But this is only what is common to the acquisition of all truly desirable objects. And inasmuch as I know what it is to labour with the hands long hours and for small wages as well as any workman to whom I address myself, and to practise self denial withal, I am emboldened to declare from experience that the gain of independence or rather self-dependence for which I plead, is worth infinitely more than all the cost of its attainment; and moreover that to attain it, in a greater or less degree according to circumstances, is within the power of far the greater number of skilled workmen engaged in our manufactures. Unhappily the earnings of the industrious workpeople in some trades have been at times, and often for a long time, so scanty as to afford scarcely the means of existence; the hand loom weavers and common Stocking makers have been very distressing cases of this kind; but they have been exceptions, and most powerfully establish the general position; for instances have not been of unfrequent occurrence in both these trades, of workmen by dint of perseverance and economy

emerging from the mass of misery around them, and placing themselves in easy and happy circumstances.

Small savings regularly persisted in soon make up very important sums. The possessor of such a fund begins to look round him and compares his own condition and that of his wife and children as to food, clothing, furniture, education, &c. with that of others, and casts about how he can improve in these particulars, without altogether swallowing up his resources. Thus the affectionate feelings of his nature are called into more lively exercise, and his home is endeared to him. This is an immense advantage, an incalculable gain. He can purchase at the first hand, and on the best terms, because he can pay promptly : his money brings him in its full worth, and respectability in at the bargain. The house is comfortable and the fireside happy ; decency and order prevail in some good degree, and there is a strong inducement to spend leisure time in the society of his family ; and thus to avoid the first and often irreparable breach in domestic felicity, arising from a habit of seeking selfish enjoyments elsewhere.

A due attention to economy secures the means for rational enjoyment and recreation. A garden can be obtained, and its neat and profitable cultivation is almost invariably the result. This has a most important bearing upon the health of a working man and his family, besides producing additional comforts. Men were never intended to be always in the factory, the loom, or the shop; bodily exercise in the open air is indispensable to a high state of health. In the garden the children of the family may be early and effectually trained to understand the value of labour ; may receive instruction both useful and pleasing in regard to produce and management; and which is most valuable of all, by helping to put in and superintend a succession of crops, gain a habit of looking forwards patiently for the profitable and happy results of their own present care and labour. A saving man will wish to educate his children, for that portion of their learning which is elementary and literary he will contrive to pay; but every man cannot but know and feel that sound education must be also domestic and moral. The early age at which most children in manufacturing districts become practically independent of their parents, is destructive of all solicitude on the one hand and reverence on the other. Boys grow up untaught and unmanageable, and girls are often grievously destitute of a knowledge of the commonest domestic duties and employments, and strangely unfitted to perform the part of wives and mothers in a working-man's family.

No parents, taking an honest pride in the well doing of their family, will make their children infant slaves, or even be content with the schoolmaster's instruction; they will themselves train them to habits of useful labour and skill, and sow in their minds the seeds of virtue, and water them with the most assiduous care. The experience of all persons acquainted with the working classes proves that the careful foreseeing heads of families are those most anxious, as they are the best able, to fulfil this imperative duty. The performance of this duty gives a satisfaction which accompanies one through life; and which will outlast life itself, both in its individual and general results.

An industrious and good workman may sometimes be enabled to become the

owner of his own dwelling. Instances of this kind are, happily, numerous enough to afford great encouragement in making the attempt. An excellent and patriotic as well as extensive mill-owner, detailed at Liverpool, how about fifty comfortable and substantial houses, with good gardens attached, which he had built and laid out thirty years ago for this purpose, had been acquired by his spinners ; the neat, and cleanly, and respectable appearance of the inmates, many of whom were the children of the original possessors, was truly gratifying. They were always the workmen he could best depend upon, and scarcely one freehold had been re-sold : with such a community he feared no turn out, and they never dreamt of a change of masters. These details were amply corroborated by the testimony of gratified visitors then present. Would to God that every working man in Great Britain were either in the occupation, or on the high road to the possession of his own freehold house and attached garden. It is probable that the next session of parliament will not pass without an attempt being made, and it may be hoped successfully, to reduce the expenses attending the conveyance of small freeholds. Mr. Slaney, M.P. stated on this subject, that already benefit societies may be so constituted as to legally facilitate the acquisition by their members of freehold property at a very trifling expense.

Many from amongst the labouring classes have exhibited vast mental and imaginative power, and have attained to a high moral elevation. When the mind is at ease on account of worldly circumstances, there is much in the nature of their ordinary employments to facilitate the exertions of the mind. Manual operations do not occupy the thoughts, which if rightly directed, may travel uninterruptedly through difficult trains of mechanical invention, philosophical inquiry, or moral research to most important and beneficial results. Such mental occupations expand the intellect and ennoble the character of those engaged in them. The best friends of inventive genius are prudence and economy ; for want of attending to their stern but faithful admonitions, men of the finest minds are seen in every resort of manufactures and trade, reduced to the most humiliating suffering and neglect.

The possession of a fund in reserve, allows of the benevolent feelings being brought into play. Surely "it is more blessed to give than to receive." And the antipodes to the parish pay-table and the workhouse is the spot where the working-man extends the hand of charity, and offers his friendly sympathy and advice to his suffering or erring brother.

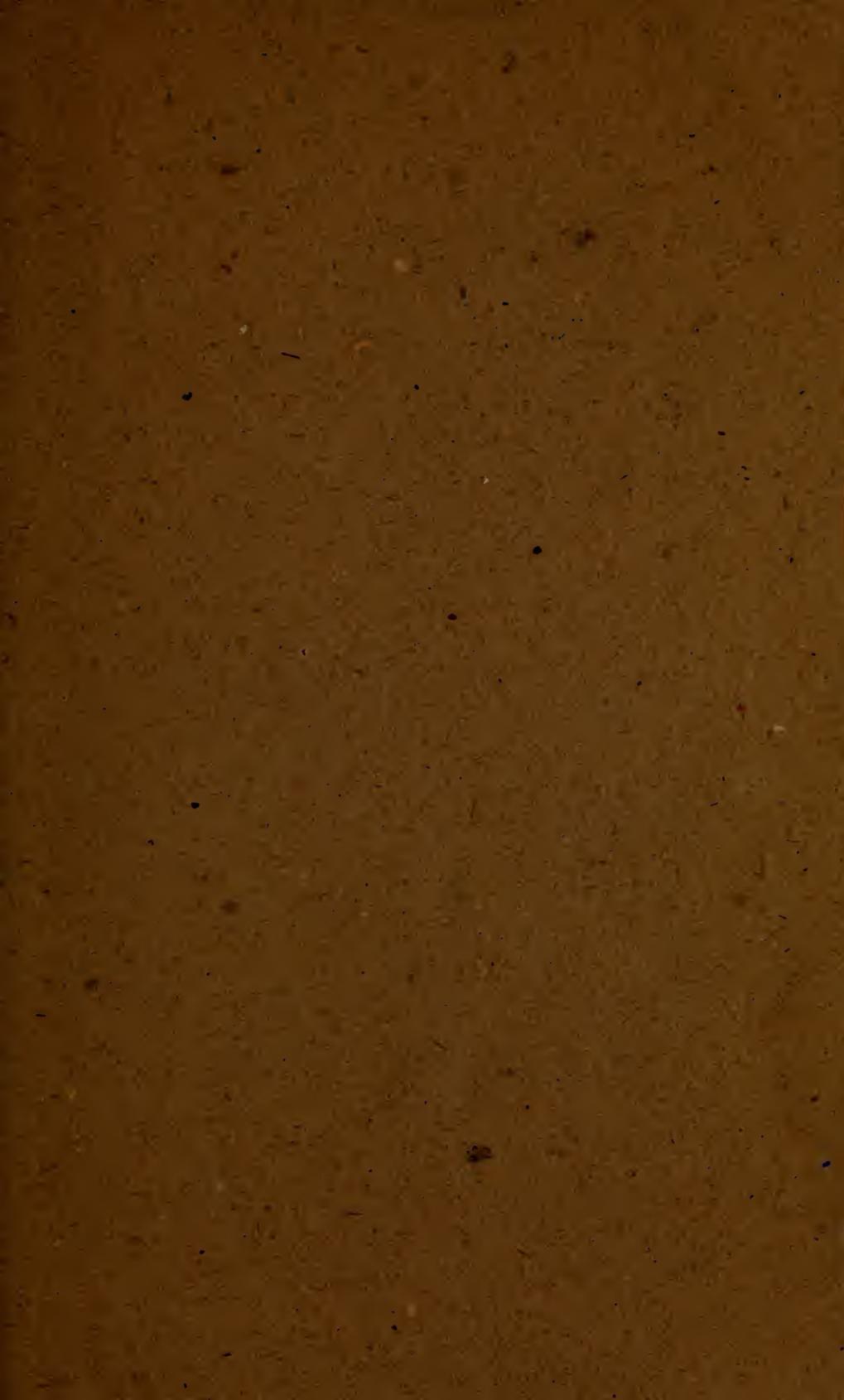
There is no virtue perhaps, by the exercise of which individuals and society gain so much as temperance, and it is a rule almost without an exception that the provident work-man is a temperate and sober man ; and that he who abandons intemperance rapidly accumulates property.

I cannot omit a remark or two, finally, on the bearing which the practice of economy of earnings has upon the question of strikes and combinations. A provident and skilful work-man, is the last to be discharged in bad times, and the first to regain employment. Masters do not fail to recognise their own interest in consulting the interest and feelings of such workmen. Steady employment is itself a first rate advantage to the prudent and clever mechanic ; and were strikes

for wages &c. mainly dependent on the wishes of such they would rarely or never happen. If the workpeople were generally and permanently thrifty, they would seldom have to submit to reduced wages, and never would turn out of work. Their capital in labour and skill would receive the aid of their capital in money, and be a fair counterbalance to the capital of their employers in money, skill, management &c. All strikes that have occurred in my time, have had so far as I can learn identical results, i.e. disappointment, chagrin, and misery. A very able paper apparently drawn up with great care by Mr. Ashworth, was read at Liverpool in the statistical section, detailing the objects, progress, and results of a turn-out at Preston in 1836. I shall not hesitate on account of their interesting nature to give some of the facts from my notes.

The earnings of a spinner's family at Bolton were in 1836. about 37s., in Preston about 33s. 6d.; the earnings of spinners' families in Manchester at considerably more. The Preston spinners turned out for the difference and to continue in the trades union. The masters offered the advance to those, only, who left the union. 660 Spinners, 1320 piecers, 6100 card room hands, and 420 others, making 8500 hands left work, of whom the voluntary turn outs were the 660 spinners, without whose labour the whole must stand. In 14 days, distress commenced, and long ere the expiration of the three months, during which the turn-outlasted, became intense. Clothes and furniture were universally disposed of, or pawned; the small shopkeepers were nearly ruined; three workpeople died from want; 20 females employed became known prostitutes; 60 spinners had deposited £1600. in the Savings' Bank of which £900. was withdrawn; the Trades Union could only furnish £4290., while the loss in wages was £65000.; the loss to the shopkeepers was moderately estimated at £5000.; and the loss of interest on the sunk capital of the Mill-owners was £45,000. The people rushed in to work on the master's original terms, but in a dreadfully suffering and debilitated state; and 200 of the spinners were altogether rejected whose places had meantime been filled up by others. Self-acting mules were for the first time introduced into Preston, and are now becoming numerous. Dr. Bardsley mentioned that in a Lancashire turn-out of six months' duration, the men went in on the master's terms, but from physical debility could only recommence work at the rate of six hours a day, for a considerable period.

I may here not improperly repeat, as generally applicable to combinations and wages, as well as many other questions affecting working men's interests, what I addressed to those employed in the Bobbin Net Trade in 1831, and again in 1833:—"That the richest, most powerful, and most natural fund on which the working man can rely, is that which he creates himself, by his own savings; it enables him to command the price of his labour, not controlled by his necessities, but influenced by a prudent regard to his own welfare and that of his family." He who practices economy and foresight, will ordinarily obtain for himself what neither acts of parliament nor any foreign aid can secure,—a healthy body, an independent mind, domestic happiness, and general esteem. He will be an ornament to the class to which he belongs, and be serviceable, in no small degree, to the community at large.



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